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make a difference



The Royal Liverpool  
and Broadgreen  
University Hospitals  
NHS Trust

## Patient information

# Going Home after your Breast Surgery

### Breast Services

This information leaflet is to help and advise you on your discharge from hospital.

#### **Bras**

Your Breast Care Nurse can advise you what bra to wear post-surgery. Usually a soft, comfortable non-underwired bra is recommended.

#### **Mastectomy**

One of the ward nurses will give you a fabric covered temporary prosthesis known as a 'softie' to wear in your bra. Once your scar is fully healed and any swelling has gone down (usually six to eight weeks after surgery), you can be fitted with permanent silicone prosthesis. Your Breast Care Nurse will arrange this.

#### **Your wound**

After your surgery, your wound may feel uncomfortable for a couple of weeks.

#### **Please contact your breast care nurse if your wound is:**

- Red and inflamed.
- Painful or swollen.
- Leaking fluid.
- Starting to open.

Keep the wound clean by showering or bathing daily using only water. You should dab around the wound with a dry, clean towel. Don't use soap, deodorant or lotions around the wound or drain. If you have a glue dressing, this won't need to be covered for showering because it's waterproof.

Don't submerge your wounds in the bath, swim or use a hot tub until all your wounds have completely healed. This is usually about six weeks after surgery.

#### **Skincare**

Once your wound has healed, you can use plain, unscented colour free, moisturiser creams, or any unperfumed skin or baby lotion. These will help you to relieve itching and ease any skin tightness. All these are available from either chemists or health stores.

## **Driving**

You must not drive for 24 to 48 hours after an anaesthetic. After this point, it is important that you don't drive until you feel confident that you can handle the car and can perform an emergency stop. You will still need to wear a seat belt. It is a good idea to drive only a short distance at first. Your breast care nurse will advise you when you are able to drive again.

## **Will I need to take time off work**

This depends on the extent of surgery you have had and the type of work you do. Discuss returning to work with your employer, doctor or Breast Care Nurse if you need guidance.

## **Getting back to normal**

Breast surgery affects everyone differently, both physically and emotionally, and there is no right or wrong way to feel. If you have any questions, problems or worries, please contact your breast care nurse. You can also visit the Macmillan Support and Information Service located on the ground floor of the Linda McCartney Centre. The support and information specialists based in the service are experienced healthcare professionals who provide emotional support, practical advice and information to anyone affected by cancer at any point of their care. The specialists run a 'Wellbeing programme' of courses and workshops to help you manage the impact of cancer on your life.

## **Feedback**

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

## **Further information**

### **The Breast Care Nurses**

**Tel: 0151 706 2927(24 hour answerphone)**

**Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 2927**

### **Breast Cancer Care**

**Tel: 0808 800 6000 (Freephone)**

### **Macmillan**

**Tel: 0808 808 00 00**

**There are many local support groups, please ask your Breast Care Nurse.**

All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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